Fifth World Spices Congress in Mumbai

321. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Fifth World Spices Congress was organised at Mumbai recently;

(b) if so, the highlights of the three-day deliberations on trade-oriented subjects; and

(c) the achievements made by the Spices Board to boost exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Fifth World Spices Congress was held at Mumbai from 27th to 29th January, 2000. The theme of the congress was "Spices to Food: New Trends, New Dimensions". During the event following three business sessions were held in which presentations were made by competent speakers:—

(i) Crops and Markets

(ii) Spices and Food

(iii) Competencies and Capabilities.

(c) The Spice Congress, jointly organised by All India Spices Exporters Forum and Spices Board, has emerged as one of the most important event in the spices sector as evident from growing global as well as domestic response. This Congress was attended by about 150 overseas delegates from 37 countries and 250 Indian delegates. Apart from presentations and deliberations during the business sessions, the Congress offered an excellent opportunity for Indian exporters to meet and directly interact with importers of major spices importing countries.

Protection to domestic industries against MNCs

322. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have plan to save the domestic industries from the onslaught of MNCs due to indiscriminate liberalisation and globalisation; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, particularly for consumer industries and agro-based industries, such as jute, textiles, sugar and tea?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) and (b) Foreign Direct Investment is not

considered a threat to an efficient domestic industry. However, the following safeguards have been provided in the context of liberalisation and globalisation:

(i) Compliance of Press Note No. 18 of 1998 Series by the foreign collaborator for setting up multiple ventures;

(ii) Insistence on a resolution of the Board of Directors of the Indian company in case of acquisition of shares by the foreign collaborator in an existing company to prevent hostile takeovers.

(iii) Imposition of a minimum 50% export obligation along with the requirement of industrial license for manufacture of SSI reserved items by a company with more than 24% foreign equity.

(iv) Imposition of the condition of dividend balancing for a period of seven years on manufacturing of 22 specified consumer items.

Obligations under WTO

323. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the country's obligations under the World Trade Organisation yet to be fulfilled; and

(b) the steps proposed for early legislation in respect thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) India has proposed relevant legislations *inter-alia* to fully comply with its obligations to provide the required level of protection to Patents, Industrial designs and Layout designs or Integrated Circuits as required under the WTO agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). India has also proposed a legislation to provide an effective sui generis system for the protection of plant varieties.

Tea Cultivation in Orissa

324. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total hectares of land brought under tea cultivation in Orissa and the details thereof;

(b) whether the plantation of tea in Orissa has proved to be remunerative;

(c) if so, the details thereof;